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Joe Courtney

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August 5, 2008

The Honorable Mary Peters  
Secretary, Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Peters:

I am writing today on behalf of my constituents in Connecticut's Second Congressional District to urge the Department, including the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), to set higher fuel economy targets and use realistic gasoline prices when finalizing the rulemaking for interim fuel economy standards.

In 2007, I was pleased to support the Energy Independence and Security Act (P.L. 110-140), which increased fuel economy standards to 35mpg by 2020. It represents a real ability to reduce oil consumption, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and save money. However, I believe we have the ability and willingness among the American people to reach this target sooner.

Our country consumes about 25 percent of the world's oil and produces more than 20 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. It is imperative that we take steps now to reduce our consumption of oil as a matter of economic, environmental and national security.

In testimony before the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming in June 2008, Acting Under Secretary for Policy, Tyler Duvall, testified that the proposed interim standards of 31.5mpg by 2015 would increase fuel economy by 4.5 percent and save nearly 55 billion gallons of fuel long-term. While I applaud the Department's effort to move this rulemaking forward, I believe this country can go further and must use accurate pricing to reflect consumer demand. It is my understanding that the Department is using unrealistic projections of gasoline prices in the \$2.50 range.

According to some analysts, if the U.S. were to reach the target of 35mpg by 2015, our country would already save an additional 300,000 barrels of oil per day by 2020, and that amount is more than what the Energy Information Administration (EIA) says could be recovered from the Outer Continental Shelf – 220,000 barrels of oil per day in 2025.

I recognize that this is an ambitious target for the Department and the auto industry, but with investment now, our country can reduce its oil consumption sooner. I thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Courtney". The signature is written in a cursive style, with "Joe" and "Courtney" connected.

JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress